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[SELECTIONS.]

DESTRUCTION OF CORN AND FLOUR IN THE SEA OF
AZOFF.

At a time when bread is rising to almost famine prices at home, it may be well to keep before the public the fact, that prodigious quantities of food have been destroyed by our fleet, much of which, beyond doubt, would have found its way into this country but for this deplorable war. A correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* enumerates our exploits of this kind in the Sea of Azoff; since which, however, there has been great additional havoc committed of the same nature. The writer says—

“The following is the authorized report of Admiral Lyons, written June 2, 1855, which makes the amount destroyed at Kertch to be a little over 18,000 sacks:—

“It has been ascertained from the custom-house returns, that the enemy on evacuating Kertch, on the 24th ultimo, destroyed 4,166,000 lb. of corn, and 508,000 lb. of flour. This quantity, taken together with what has been destroyed by the allied squadrons in the sea of Azoff, comprises nearly four months’ rations for an army of 100,000 men”

The guilt of destroying human food at Kertch belongs to the Russians, but the guilt of destroying much larger quantities in the Sea of Azoff belongs undoubtedly to the allies, as the following extracts from authorized reports will abundantly prove.

Captain Lyons, writing “off Arabat, May 23, 1855,” and reporting his attack on Berdiansk, states that the work was done “without molestation,” and that

“Many vessels were destroyed. and corn stores to the estimated value of £50,000.”

Writing again on the following day (29th) “off Genitchi,” he informs his superior that Lieutenant Mackenzie had displayed conspicuous merit:—

“When more than ninety vessels, and also corn for the Russian army of the value of £100,000, were destroyed, owing to his gallantry and ability, with so trifling a loss as one man slightly wounded. Since the squadron entered the Sea of Azoff, four days ago, the enemy has lost four steamers of war, two hundred and forty-six merchant vessels, also corn and flour magazines to the value of at least £150,000.”

Admiral Lyons, writing on the 2nd of June from the Straits of Kertch, confirms the foregoing accounts in the following report of the success of the allies:—

“They bombarded Arabat and blew up the powder magazine, and destroyed 246 merchant vessels, which were employed in the conveyance of supplies to the Russian army in the Crimea, as well as immense magazines of corn and flour at Berdiansk and Genitchi, containing at least two months’ rations for an army of 100,000 men.”

Admiral Bruat, writing off Kertch, June 1, corroborates this statement, and adds:—

“During this time, the English gun-boats had attacked Genitchi. Their boats boldly ventured into the arm of the sea which connects the Sea of Azoff with the Putrid Sea, and there set fire to more than seventy vessels, and very large stores of grain.”

Lord Raglan, in a summary report of June 2, conveys home the “pleasing intelligence” of the above, with a verbal variation that should not be over-looked:—

"Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons states, that in no longer a period than four days, the squadron has destroyed 241 vessels, employed exclusively in transporting provisions to the Crimea, besides four war steamers, and six millions of rations of flour and corn."

In addition to the above, the *North German Journal* contains the following letter relative to the operations of the allies against Taganrog, written by a commercial house at the latter place, to its correspondents at Stettin:—

Taganrog, 6th Jun.

"On the 3d June, at five a. m., 16 steamers and 30 armed boats approached the harbor and shore, where are situated the great stores of building timber, as well as 300 magazines, containing import goods.

"The hour having expired, the bombardment commenced about nine, and lasted until four p. m. The town was overwhelmed with shells and rockets. The result was, that the whole neighborhood of the 'Change, more than 300 stores mostly filled with import goods, considerable stores of timber, numerous shops and houses, especially about half the High street, some hospitals and churches (?), even those distant from the sea, together with magazines containing 15,000 'tschetwerts' (about 10,000 quarters) of grain, were reduced to ashes.

"It was not until half-past five p. m., that they completed their work, and re-embarked. The damage done is calculated at seven millions of silver roubles. On the 4th, the enemy's squadron weighed and stood to sea. The fire at the Exchange continues. Yesterday and this day, nothing more has occurred, as the enemy's ships have sailed for Marinopol, where they have burned magazines containing from 70,000 to 80,000 'tschetwerts' 50,000 to 60,000 quarters) of corn."

Captain Lyons writes June 6th, 1855, off the town of Gheisk:—

"The marines of this ship, under First-lieutenant Macnamara, R.M.A., and a French party, landed and destroyed a vast quantity of hay, stacked on the beach, ready for conveyance to the Crimea, and several thousand quarters of wheat, &c."

And the same officer, writing to his superior, off Kiten Bay, June 10, says:—

"I have the honor to enclose a letter from Lieutenant Horton, commanding Her Majesty's ship *Ardent*, which I received on my arrival here this morning, informing me that he yesterday set fire to and destroyed 30,000 sacks of flour, stacked on the beach in Kiten Bay."

I am not sure that the foregoing extracts contain the whole of the melancholy catalogue of destruction that this "Christian" war has produced for the admonition or the warning of mankind, but they are enough to prove that when once the spirit of vengeance is let loose among governments, it prompts them to glory in deeds of wanton wickedness that would condemn to utter infamy any private individual. The *Times'* correspondent is right in expressing the humane wish that the food destroyed (but not at Kertch only) had been saved from the flames,—and it is for the *Guardian* and other such authorities to prove that the bread of the people at home is not made all the dearer by the inhumanities of war. What may be the consequence of such an outrage upon the bounty of a merciful Providence I take not upon me to anticipate; but if it be a righteous law that "with whatsoever measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again," it may honestly be feared that a people who suffer and applaud the outrage will, in the future of that retributive Providence, be compelled to lament their folly when it is too late.

Yours truly,

A TRUE BRITON.

Manchester, Oct. 24, 1855.—Herald of Peace, Dec., 1855.